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“Only the Son Makes You Free” (Part 10)

In the context of these reflections on attitudes that make us unfree and which we have to overcome with the help of God, or at least to deal with them in the right way, I refer to the important book by Dietrich von Hildebrand: "The transformation in Christ". In addition to very good topics covered in it, there is a chapter on "true freedom", which serves as a background and inspiration for this themes of the last days. This book, as well as other publications by Dietrich von Hildebrand, is also available in English and Spanish. His writings are a true spiritual treasure and help greatly to form the important distinction of spirits, which is so essential, especially in the present time.

Today, after our Mexican pilgrims have returned to their country after fruitful retreats in the Holy Land, I would like to conclude with this series of themes. I will refer to this issue later to address other forms of non-freedom that have not yet been dealt with. These reflections are intended to help us grow into greater freedom in Christ, so that the Lord can work even more through us.

It should be pointed out once again that the issue of the freedom mentioned is about an inner transformation of man. The Son of God leads us to all freedom! Therefore, the forms of non-freedom that we still discover in ourselves are opened to God, so that they may be touched and liberated by Him, so that our christian life in all areas is led by the Spirit of the Lord.

Today we are continuing the issue of excessive influence with another kind of influence, namely:

False indulgence

This false indulgence, sometimes we can also identify it as "false pity", does not reach as deep as the excessive influence discussed in recent days, but it can become very hindering on the path of following Christ.

A certain good-naturedness, which degenerates into weakness, does not resist the wishes and requests of other people. Although one does not take over the opinions of other people, one cannot escape the urge and the surge properly and is taken "in tow" so to speak.

If the wishes of other people go against conscience, one will resist, but in the case of neutral things, even those that are considered unnecessary or pointless, one can be determined by other people.

It is those people who find it difficult to say no, those who can be exploited by all, and who waste their strength and time because they are too weak to resist the wishes of others.

Such people consider it rude to dismiss the expressed desire, or feel that the other man is sorry, he does not want the other to get into discontent and thus easily becomes the slave of other people. The (false) pity can even sometimes lead to the condoning of injustice, or at least not to do anything against it.

This lack of freedom deforms the good desire to help and serve other people. This will be all the more difficult to recognize if it is strongly linked to a religious attitude that invites us to love our neighbour. Words spoken by the Lord, for example, in the Sermon on the Mount, can then easily create scruples and a kind of "bad conscience" and one thinks that one acts against love if one does not correspond to the wishes of other people.

But one has to learn to distinguish well. In spite of all our loving openness to the other person, our faith is not a "desire-fulfilling religion". It must be examined whether the desire of the other man has a right and it is in accordance with the commandment of love, or whether we act out of false indulgence.

The latter must be seriously combated and it is already a great step forward if we recognise it.

One must learn to "stay" through special ascetic exercises and also to ensure that all legitimate obligations towards others are meticulously fulfilled, so that a kind of "debt account" does not arise. For such an actual or supposed "debt account" creates a bad conscience, which then increases the false indulgence.

As with all other non-freedoms, this weakness must be brought to God, and we have to resist the whisperings of a false pity, and taken clear positions tested before the Lord. This must also be defended when one feels that one is being "weakened" from within, one has to learn to stay. This is not a hardening, but the strengthening of one's own person according to the known truth.